

30 January 1965

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Overhead Reconnaissance

1. The acquisition of intelligence by overhead reconnaissance is a responsibility of the Director of Central Intelligence. Satellite photography makes a most important input into the intelligence inventory. DCI in discharging his statutory responsibilities for producing estimates concerning the security of the United States must direct this intelligence-acquiring facility to meet his needs. To do this the DCI, directly or through subordinates responsible to him, and with the continuing advice of the United States Intelligence Board, should determine the frequency of satellite missions, the ephemeris or track for such missions, the targets and the priority in which they must be treated, and the control of the satellite when in orbit to insure coverage of the targets and therefore the acquisition of information considered essential by the DCI.

2. The Department of Defense or any division of it, i.e., NRO or the Air Force, must because of their facilities, organization and available funds, perform all satellite missions and this involves providing launching facilities, boosters, spacecraft and payloads developed by them and/or others, recovery facilities and the organization to accomplish the missions, including necessary inspection, checkout, etc., to insure reliability. There appears no interference, overlap or gaps between these defined responsibilities and those defined in (1.) above.

3. DCI, with the continuing advice of the United States Intelligence Board, must establish the criteria for new and improved satellite systems, calling upon the most able resources available to the Government to meet such requirements. The Director of Central Intelligence and the Secretary of Defense should make the final judgment of the system or systems needed to meet established requirements, and after carefully and independently reviewing proposed systems as originated by NRO, the Air Force, CIA or others, should call upon the originating organization to further the development in stages and in a manner consistent with careful judgment concerning the state of the art on the one hand, and the need for expeditious pursuit to meet intelligence needs, on the other hand. Development should be pursued by the originating organization, assuming it has such competence, and to include research, development, experimentation and the production of the required spacecraft, cameras, reentry vehicles, etc., all of which should be brought together by the responsible agency into a finished package to be delivered to the organization responsible for launching and recovery.

NRO review(s)